

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Emus near Perth.—I saw seven of these birds, on July 18, 1970, 11 miles NNW of Perth. They were approximately two miles due S. of Lake Gngangara. They were seen again on September 16, on newly cleared forestry land just S. of the Gngangara pine plantation.

—BRIAN HUTCHISON, Woodlands

Cockatiels near Perth.—Apparently the Cockatiel (*Leptolophus hollandicus*) has not been previously reported in the near vicinity of Perth. Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*, 4th edn., 1967) state they avoid the South-West jarrah block but occasionally penetrate as far as Bridgetown. On March 5, 1970 I saw five Cockatiels in Monash Avenue, Hollywood. They perched on telegraph lines and then flew south. I watched them until they were out of sight. By their nervous behaviour and by the way they flew as a flock I was convinced they were wild birds.

—BRIAN HUTCHISON, Woodlands

Hovering in the Brown Honeyeater.—A Brown Honeyeater (*Lichmera indistincta*) observed in my garden at Woodlands has a very deformed left leg and finds it very difficult to perch on the *Grevillea* and *Banksia* flowers from which it is extracting nectar. The bird has overcome the problem by hovering in front of the flowers in the manner of a hummingbird. I have observed the bird actually probe the flowers over which it is hovering. I have never observed this practice before and assume it is a development, or adaptation for survival, induced by its deformity.

—BRIAN HUTCHISON, Woodlands.

Australian Pratincoles in Southern Western Australia.—At 7.40 a.m. on 29 January 1971, two Australian Pratincoles (*Siltia isabella*) were observed on Kanandah Station near the western edge of the Nullarbor Plain. The location (30° 55' S, 124° 45' E) was 30 km. north of Naretha and was in a Myall-Saltbush-Bluebush association which had been grazed by sheep since 1962 and which had just experienced two years of below average rainfall. They were seen walking on a bare area and, when disturbed, they flew off rapidly to the north.

Although this species has been reported on the South Australian section of the Nullarbor Plain (Le Souef, 1921, *Emu*, 21, 1921: 125-128); Serventy, *W. Aust. Nat.*, 6, 1958: 152), this would appear the first recorded sighting from southern Western Australia.

—M. G. BROOKER, Gooseberry Hill.

Yellow Figbird in Western Australia.—Among the birds I recently collected for the American Museum of Natural History in the central highlands of the Kimberley Division was a species new for Western Australia. This was the Yellow Figbird (*Sphecotheres flaviventris*), two males and a female taken on Manning Creek, three miles west of Mt. Barnett Homestead (16° 40' S, 125° 55' E), on 28 May 1970.

The birds were feeding on the ripe fruits of a rock-fig believed to be *Ficus nesophila*. Other birds feeding on these figs included the Black-faced and White-breasted Cuckoo-Shrikes, Great Bower-bird, Olive-backed Oriole and Silver-crowned Friarbird.

There is no record of the Yellow Figbird nearer to Manning Creek than at Port Keats, Northern Territory, 280 miles to the north-east.

—W. H. BUTLER, Wanneroo.

Notes on the Tawny Frogmouth.—At 2145 hours on February 17, 1970, three miles west of Mundaring Weir, two Tawny Frogmouths, *Podargus strigoides*, were disturbed and flew to a limb of a dead Marri 9 metres from the ground. While in flight one bird called "hoo hoo"; the other a quick series of sharp "ooms." Perched facing the same direction they vigorously preened the head of each other; occasionally preening themselves. Only once did the beak of a bird come into contact with the oil gland. Sometimes a foot was raised for scratching. During preening the birds were in firm bodily contact; a few small feathers were shed; and at least one bird frequently uttered a high pitched squeaking call.

The temperature was 17° Centigrade; the air almost calm; the moon